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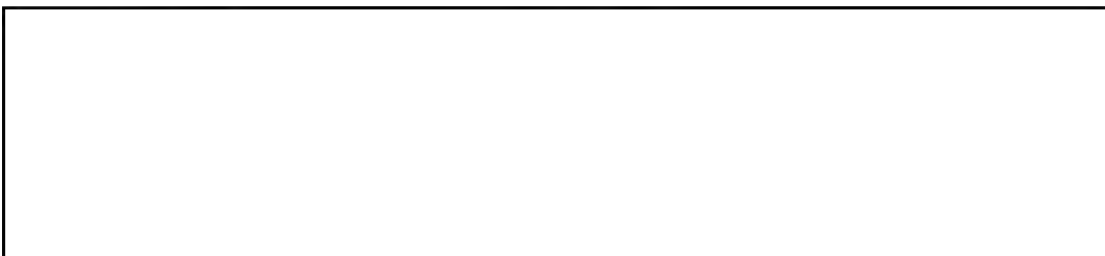
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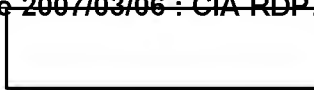
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VIETNAM

A major speech yesterday in Saigon by General Tran Van Tra, who commanded communist military forces in the south, provides few clues to communist thinking on the new administration there.

Tra took a stridently nationalistic tone, summarizing Vietnam's long history of defending itself against aggression and stressing the pride all Vietnamese should share in the recent victory. He left no doubt that the communists consider Vietnam one country.

He reiterated the policy of "leniency" that was first broadcast by the Viet Cong's Liberation Radio following the capture of Da Nang last month, emphasizing that former government, military, and civilian employees will be welcome in the new society, but warning that "severe punishment" awaits those who continue to "detach themselves from the people." He called on students, women's groups, and workers to form a vanguard to restore the society and economy, predicting that the task ahead would be long and difficult.

Tra spoke as chairman of the "Saigon - Gia Dinh Military Committee," but he indicated that he was speaking for the Provisional Revolutionary Government when he congratulated the "people" for their recent victory. His speech, however, failed to provide any specific information about the form of the new Saigon government or the identity of its leaders. No well-known communist official other than Tra appeared at the ceremonies; the members of his committee are all from the communists' southern military command structure and are little known to the non-communist South Vietnamese.

Although it has been a week since the liberation of Saigon, there have been no public statements by any of the other leaders of the various communist political and military front organizations. Hanoi, moreover, has yet to publish in its official media anything more than congratulatory remarks on the recent victory. The Vietnamese may be withholding important announcements until the celebration of Ho Chi Minh's birthday on May 19.

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The communists' evident intention to establish a nominally separate government in the south indicates that Hanoi is content to move slowly toward formal reunification. North Vietnam may intend to continue using the international standing of the PRG to establish the legitimacy of the communists' southern regime. Once this is accomplished, Hanoi may be willing to stage a plebiscite or use some other device to legitimize reunification. This would allow Hanoi to claim that reunification has been sought and accepted by the southerners, and that it is not merely the consequence of conquest by North Vietnamese divisions.



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OAS

A long list of grievances against the US is sure to be aired at the OAS General Assembly opening today in Washington. Yesterday, the Peruvian embassy brought together a number of Latin American foreign ministers for preparatory talks aimed at keeping alive the consensus that has repeatedly pitted the Latin Americans against the US.

The assembly will run for perhaps two weeks. The opening days, which will set the tone for the remaining sessions, are likely to be fairly informal, with the foreign ministers free to raise topics of their choice. Panama, for example, has laid elaborate groundwork for a Latin American statement supporting it on the Canal Zone. Some countries will probably want to hammer again at the question of sanctions against Cuba. If a decision is made against verbatim minutes at the initial talks, some issues may be solved without their having to be raised formally.

When they do get around to the actual agenda, the members will find it burdened with complex issues, several of them relating to the new international economic order favored by the Latin Americans. Some of these topics may lead to heated debate and pose a threat to Latin unity. These include the US Trade Reform Act, the high price of oil, collective economic security, and the election of a new secretary general. Whether the conference gets bogged down in this heavy schedule or focuses on the major issues will depend on the effectiveness of the delegations that want the OAS to become a working instrument.

The small countries in particular value the OAS highly for the security protection, humanitarian functions, and development programs it offers. The more important nations have varying opinions about its utility.

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With the breakdown of the hemispheric dialogue, a number of nations view the OAS as the only enduring pan-American forum and would be loath to see it collapse.

The Latin Americans come to Washington enjoying a new sense of self-esteem. They have been active--and in their eyes effective--in many international conferences, especially those devoted to economic relations with the developed countries. They have gained valuable experience in formulating positions on complicated issues and have learned to put aside differences for the sake of matters of common concern. All of this gives them a better chance to influence the industrialized world.

Their sense of solidarity is enhanced by their view that US prestige is declining as a result of events in Southeast Asia and US failure to follow through on the new dialogue. Some countries hold back support for the US because they distrust Washington's judgment in such policies as detente and a possible softening toward Cuba. An ambivalence remains, however, because many still prefer to see a strong US, clearly benevolent toward Latin America.

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IRAN-IRAQ

The Shah has informed Ambassador Helms that he is studying a proposal for a Persian Gulf collective security pact put forward by Iraqi leader Saddam Husayn Tikriti during Saddam's recent visit to Tehran.

The Shah indicated that Baghdad's proposal would provide for common action to meet both "local" and "external" threats. The Shah regarded it as offering some guarantee that Iraq would not move forcibly to secure its demands for territorial concessions from Kuwait, as well as suggesting Iraqi willingness to withdraw "some-what" from Soviet influence.

The Shah has long regarded the conservative Arab states in the Gulf as vulnerable to radical subversion, but he has been unsuccessful in his efforts to foster a regional security arrangement that excluded--indeed, was largely aimed against--the leftist regime in Iraq. The Shah's scheme foundered on traditional Arab-Persian rivalry, distrust of Iranian power and intentions in the Gulf, and the reluctance of conservative Arab leaders to antagonize Baghdad by joining non-Arab Iran in such an arrangement.



The comprehensive accord reached by the Shah and Saddam Husayn in Algiers

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last March, the recent leadership change in Saudi Arabia, and now the sponsorship of a security pact by the Baghdad regime itself have altered the situation considerably. A Gulf-wide pact may now be possible, provided the trilateral relationship among the Shah, Saddam Husayn, and Prince Fahd of Saudi Arabia continues on a positive course.

Any such arrangement probably would include a mutual nonaggression pledge, an agreement to consult on Gulf problems, and some formula expressing the common interest of Gulf states in excluding foreign powers from interfering in area affairs. Noninterference by foreign powers has been a common theme in the public statements of Iranian and Iraqi leaders since the signing of the Algiers accord. As a possible trade-off, Baghdad might promise to limit the Soviet navy's access to Iraqi ports in return for Iranian pressure on Bahrain to terminate the small US naval presence there.

The Shah's only justification for the presence of the US navy's Middle East force has been that it is a counter to Soviet naval activity in the Gulf. It would be difficult for him to push the Iraqis to exclude the Soviets without also supporting exclusion of the US. The Shah would consider he had gained by such a trade-off, partly because it would leave the Iranian navy as the most powerful in the area.

Baghdad's motives in proposing a Gulf security arrangement are less clear. Iraq is trying to project an image of a powerful yet responsible Gulf Arab state. Such a posture, it hopes, will help increase its influence among the small Gulf states. Baghdad, moreover, may see a broader security pact as a means of obtaining a formal nonaggression agreement with Iran.

Saddam Husayn may also hope to trade Iraqi cooperation on Gulf security for Iranian or Saudi help in securing territorial concessions from Kuwait. Baghdad continues to press Kuwait to cede two islands flanking the

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approaches to Iraq's port of Umm Qasr. Kuwait is unlikely to accept an arrangement that calls for ceding territory, but it might--under pressure from Tehran and Riyadh--agree to some face-saving formula such as a long-term lease of territory.

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The Saudi attitude on a security pact would be critical in determining how the smaller Arab Gulf states--particularly Qatar and Bahrain--react to any proposals. The leaders of Qatar and Bahrain generally remain skeptical about Iraqi as well as Iranian intentions in the Gulf. The ruler of Qatar recently told a US official that he had no illusions about Baghdad's ending its subversion against Gulf states.

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ANGOLA

A high-ranking Portuguese official has blamed the Marxist-oriented Popular Movement for the Independence of Angola for initiating the violence in Luanda last week. Fighting between the Popular Movement and the National Front for the Liberation of Angola lasted for a week and resulted in some 1,000 deaths.

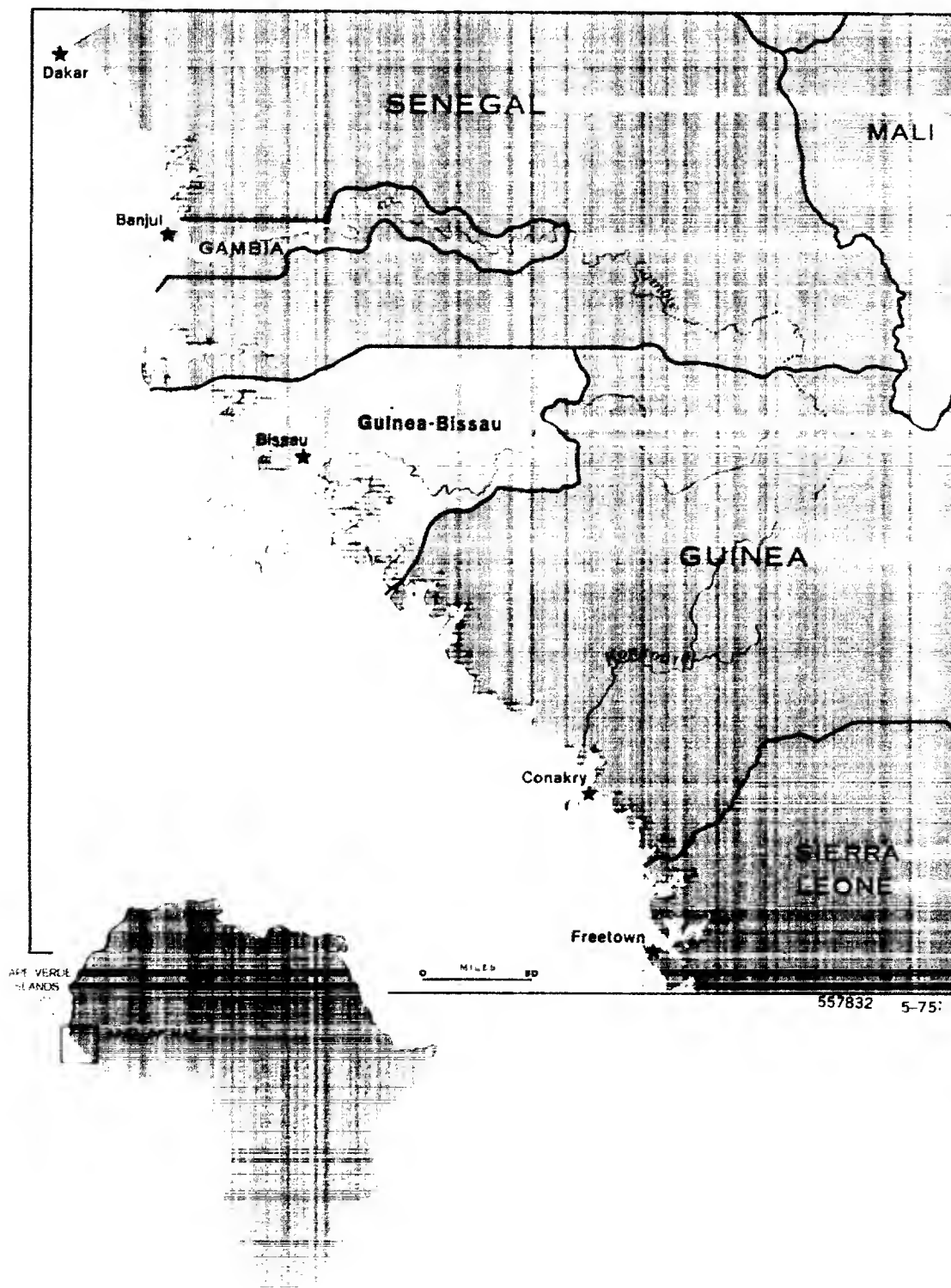
Colonel da Cunha, President Costa Gomes' chief of cabinet, recently told US officials in Lisbon that the Popular Movement resorted to violence in an attempt to revive its flagging political position. The Popular Movement is not as well organized and equipped as the National Front, nor is it as popular as Angola's other liberation movement, the National Union for the Total Independence of Angola. Da Cunha also said the government has evidence that clashes between blacks and whites which occurred during the violence were provoked by Popular Movement agitators.

Da Cunha believes that Angola will become a "one-party, one-leader" state. He thinks Jonas Savimbi, leader of the National Union, will eventually emerge as Angola's leader, even though Savimbi's military organization is the smallest among the three liberation movements. The three groups share power in the transitional government.

Da Cunha's assessments appear generally accurate. The Popular Movement, which has strong support among Luanda's workers, apparently was planning massive demonstrations to coincide with May Day. The National Front possibly believed its rival was also planning a coup with Portuguese connivance. With tensions already high, following a previous wave of fighting in late March, a new outbreak of violence was inevitable.

Savimbi has been able to keep his organization from becoming involved in the rivalry between the Popular Movement and the National Front. He is becoming

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known as a responsible moderate among Angolans and neighboring African leaders who have tended to support the other two nationalist groups. If he can extend his reputation in Angola beyond the central part of the territory, where he now derives the bulk of his support, he may become the dominant political force.

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CAPE VERDE ISLANDS

Lisbon has announced that elections for a national assembly for the Cape Verde Islands will be held on June 30--five days before the archipelago becomes independent under arrangements negotiated last December.

The assembly will have two major tasks when it is installed. The deputies will draft a constitution for the islands and will take up the issue of union with the mainland Republic of Guinea-Bissau, which received its independence from Portugal last September.

The government of Guinea-Bissau is pushing hard for union. The African Party for the Independence of Portuguese Guinea and Cape Verde (PAIGC), the sole political party in Guinea-Bissau, has become the only meaningful political force on the islands as well. The PAIGC fought the Portuguese for more than a decade to achieve independence for both areas; the bulk of its leadership comes from the islands. Party militants have been busy politicking since last fall and now dominate Cape Verde's transitional government.

At this time, union appears to be a foregone conclusion. Party leaders realize, however, that the islands will constitute an economic drain on Guinea-Bissau's own very limited resources, and they are actively seeking foreign assistance. A party delegation visited the US in March to solicit aid for the islands; its members made a point of referring to the considerable number of Cape Verdeans who had worked in the northeastern US and then retired to the islands.

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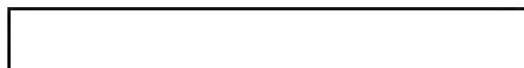
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